

Claims

In the claims:

1 1. A method comprising:  
2 receiving an incoming call at an automated attendant port;  
3 receiving a call handle associated with the incoming call;  
4 applying the call handle to retrieve caller information associated with the call  
5 handle; and

6 using the retrieved caller information to handle the call if caller information  
7 associated with the call handle is found.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving a call handle comprises  
2 receiving a tone sequence at the automated attendant port, decoding the tone sequence,  
3 and deriving the call handle from the decoded tone sequence.

4 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the tone sequence is a DTMF tone  
5 sequence transmitted to the port over the same transmission line as the incoming call.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving a call handle comprises  
2 receiving a call handle message through a digital interface.

3 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the digital interface comprises a digital  
4 backplane connection to a switch from which the incoming call was received.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving an incoming call comprises  
2 receiving an incoming call from a switch and wherein receiving a call handle comprises  
3 receiving a call handle from the switch.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein using the retrieved caller information  
2 comprises providing audio information in a language previously selected by the caller.

1 8. The method of claim 1, if no caller information associated with the call  
2 handle is found, further comprising:

3 requesting caller information from the caller;

4 storing received caller information in association with the call handle; and

5 using the received caller information to handle the call.

1 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving an indication of  
2 whether the call is a forwarded call and wherein retrieving caller information and using  
3 the retrieved information are performed only if the call is a forwarded call.

1 10. The method of claim 9, if the call is not a forwarded call, further  
2 comprising:

3 requesting caller information from the caller;

4 storing received caller information in association with the call handle; and

5 using the received caller information to handle the call.

1 11. A machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing  
2 instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform  
3 operations comprising:

4 receiving an incoming call at an automated attendant port;

5 receiving a call handle associated with the incoming call;

6 applying the call handle to retrieve caller information associated with the call  
7 handle; and  
8 using the retrieved caller information to handle the call if caller information  
9 associated with the call handle is found.

1 12. The medium of claim 11, wherein if no caller information associated with  
2 the call handle is found, the instructions, when executed by the machine, cause the  
3 machine to perform further operations comprising:

4 requesting caller information from the caller;  
5 storing received caller information in association with the call handle; and  
6 using the received caller information to handle the call.

1 13. The method of claim 11, wherein if the call is not a forwarded call, the  
2 instructions, when executed by the machine, cause the machine to perform further  
3 operations comprising:

4 requesting caller information from the caller;  
5 storing received caller information in association with the call handle; and  
6 using the received caller information to handle the call.

1 14. An apparatus comprising:  
2 an automated attendant port to receive an incoming call;  
3 an automated attendant port to receive a call handle associated with the incoming  
4 call;  
5 a memory containing caller information associated with call handles; and

6 a processor to apply the call handle to retrieve caller information and use the  
7 retrieved caller information to handle the call if caller information associated with the call  
8 handle is found.

1 15. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein the automated attendant port to receive  
2 the call handle comprises a digital interface.

1 16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the digital interface comprises a digital  
2 backplane connection to a switch from which the incoming call was received.

1 17. A method comprising:  
2 receiving an incoming call;  
3 generating a call handle for the incoming call;  
4 routing the incoming call to a port of a call handling system;  
5 sending the call handle to the call handling system in association with the routed  
6 call;  
7 (receiving a transfer) of the routed call from the call handling system;  
8 re-routing the incoming call back to a port of the call handling system; and  
9 sending the call handle to the call handling system in association with the re-  
10 routed call.

1 18. The method of claim 17, wherein sending the call handle comprises  
2 deriving a tone sequence for the identification, coding the tone sequence into tones and  
3 sending the tone sequence to the call handling system port.

536/85/1  
2  
3  
19. The method of claim 17, wherein the tone sequence is a DTMF tone sequence transmitted to the call handling system port over the same transmission line as the incoming call.

1  
2  
20. The method of claim 17, wherein sending the call handle comprises sending an identification message through a digital interface.

536/85/1  
2  
21. The method of claim 17, wherein the digital interface comprises a digital backplane connection to the call handling system.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
22. A machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing instructions which, when executed by a machine, cause the machine to perform operations comprising:  
WSK receiving an incoming call;  
CSR generating a call handle for the incoming call;  
routing the incoming call to a port of a call handling system;  
sending the call handle to the call handling system in association with the routed call;  
receiving a transfer of the routed call from the call handling system;  
re-routing the incoming call back to a port of the call handling system; and  
sending the call handle to the call handling system in association with the re-routed call.

1  
2  
23. The medium of claim 22, wherein the instructions for sending the call handle comprise instructions which, when executed by the machine, cause the machine to

3 perform further operations comprising sending an identification message through a digital  
4 interface.

1 24. The medium of claim 23, wherein the digital interface comprises a digital  
2 backplane connection to the call handling system.

1 25. A method comprising:  
2 a port to receive an incoming call;  
3 a call handle generator to generate a call handle for the incoming call;  
4 a switching network to route the incoming call to a port of a call handling system;  
5 and  
6 an interface to send the call handle to the call handling system in association with  
7 the routed call.

1 26. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the interface comprises a digital  
2 interface.

1 27. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the digital interface comprises a digital  
2 backplane connection to the call handling system.